

Weekly Views

September 27, 2012

The Indiana Women's Prison (IWP) and Martin University are collaborating to offer a free volunteer college program to the offenders. The incarcerated women from Marion County and the surrounding counties who have completed high school degrees or GEDs can apply to the program. Some of the courses offered will include intro to college studies, literature writing, political science and remedial reading and writing. The goal of the program is to provide quality liberal arts education for women in prison that will allow them to be more productive and constructive members of society.

Members from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Veteran Justice Outreach Initiative (VJOI) at the Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center in San Diego, California and from the local Indiana VA office visited the Indianapolis Re-Entry Educational Facility to learn about the INVET Unit. INVET residents served as tour guides for VA Specialists Angela Simoneau and Joy Villavicencio, showing them around the facility, visiting each area in which residents transferring in from other IDOC facilities intake and process before being placed in the INVET Unit where they are eligible to participate in specialized programs geared towards helping incarcerated veterans. Simoneau and Villavicencio stated the VJOI is considering modeling a program similar to that of INVET format in order to assist veteran offenders involved in the local courts, jails, and state correctional facilities.

Camp Summit Boot Camp received a special visit by former Governor Joe Kernan, who spoke to students about his experience in the United States Navy and his time in a North Vietnamese prison camp. Governor Kernan emphasized perseverance and good decision making as important elements in overcoming obstacles to be successful.

Future Soldier Program students at Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility were visited by guest speakers Staff Sergeant Pedigo and Staff Sergeant Antrim. Staff Sergeant Pedigo and Staff Sergeant Antrim shared their experiences of serving in overseas in Afghanistan, Iraq and Bosnia. Both men serve in the 1st Battalion of the 151st Infantry Division which is part of the 76th Infantry Brigade of the Indiana National Guard.

The Plainfield Correctional Facility delivered pumpkins to Mill Creek East elementary school to be utilized in their fall programming. Kids who would not have been able to participate in the activities because of a lack of a pumpkin, are now able to.

The Reception-Diagnostic Center hosted groups from the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy and Franklin College. Jail Officers and students from a corrections class toured the facility and learned about the IDOC intake process.

"Revival in Prison Ministry" held an old fashioned tent revival at the Putnamville Correctional Facility. Evangelists Dave and Deb Brewer led the offenders in prayer, song, and testimonial. The Friday, Saturday and Sunday event was organized by Volunteer Coordinator Derek Smith.

Employees at the Indiana State Prison and the offender population played three softball games. Each offender recreation line made up a team to play against staff. ISP staff did not come out victorious, being swept by the offender teams 3-0. Even though the employees did not win, it was a positive experience, and both staff and the offender population look forward to playing again.

Chain O' Lakes Correctional Facility (COL) held a staff recall. Superintendent Kathy Griffin announced Sergeant Jason Brooks was selected by COL staff as Employee of the Quarter. Sergeant Brooks has worked at Chain O'Lakes for eleven and a half years and has been a Sergeant for five of those years. Sergeant Brooks serves as the assistant ACA Coordinator and is described as dependable and hard working. Officer Joseph Weaver, a six year veteran in custody and adjunct instructor, was also promoted to the position of Training Officer. During the recall, staff were reminded of the facility's upcoming ACA audit and to keep up the good work.

Miami Correctional Facility hosted a Straight Talk Program for students from Clinton Central High School. The students are in George Gilbert's Sociology Class. Mr. Gilbert brings students to the facility twice a year to talk to offenders about prison life. They also get a chance to talk to a few staff members about their jobs and what it is like to work in a prison.

In cooperation with ARAMARK Food Service, Westville Correctional Facility (WCC) is now serving Fresh Favorites to visitors. Upon arrival, visitors seeing offenders in General Population may place Fresh Favorite food orders as they register for their visit. The order is promptly sent to the facility's Production Kitchen for process. ARAMARK Staff and WCC offender deliverers are guaranteeing the food's arrival in the Visiting Room within 15 minutes of placing their order. Westville is now in its 2nd full week of service and the response has been positive and the participation encouraging.

Evangel Prison Ministries visited Madison Correctional Facility and provided a sort of "Concert in the Park." All offenders and those involved in the work release program were invited to enjoy hot dogs, chips, cookies, and a beverage, along with an Evangelical worship service, complete with a band. The weather held out and a great time was had by all.

Pendleton Correctional Facility K-9 Handlers Jeremiah Norris and Eric Hammond along with explosives detection canine Hanni were selected once again for a special detail to search the grounds of Grissom Air Force Base prior to the landing of a Presidential Jet.